



National Assembly for Wales

[Business Committee](#)

June 2020

## **Amending Standing Orders: Remote Voting**

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### **Purpose**

1. In accordance with Standing Order 11.7(iv), the Business Committee is responsible for making recommendations on the general practice and procedures of the Senedd, including any proposals for the re-making or revision of Standing Orders.
2. The report recommends amendments to Standing Order 34. The proposals for new Standing Orders are at Annex A.

### **Background**

3. The Business Committee, having initially considered the potential impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on Senedd business at the end of March 2020, agreed to introduce a number of new emergency procedures under Standing Order 34. Among these provisions were new Standing Order 34.11 which provides for weighted voting in Plenary where the Llywydd determines it is required for the protection of public health. Every Plenary vote

since 1 April has been conducted using weighted voting, in the absence of any facility for Members to vote individually from remote locations.

4. The Business Committee is now looking to introduce a system of electronic voting from remote locations in the near future, which could be used for both fully virtual and hybrid meetings.
5. The Standing Order changes required to introduce such a system can be found at Annex A. The changes facilitate the introduction of such a system by over-riding the requirement in Standing Order 12.41 for Members to vote 'in person'. The new Standing Order gives the Llywydd the discretion to decide, in consultation with the Business Committee, when remote voting should be used for public health reasons.

#### **Action**

6. The Business Committee formally agreed the changes to Standing Orders on 15 June 2020 and the Senedd is invited to approve the proposals at Annex A.

## 34. STANDING ORDER 34 – Emergency Procedures

### Voting in Plenary

34.14A Where the Presiding Officer, having consulted Business Committee, determines that it is required for the protection of public health, arrangements may be made for Members to vote from any location by electronic means.

34.14B Subject to Standing Orders 12.41A–H, Members must cast their vote individually (but are not obliged to vote).

34.14C Standing Orders 34.14A and 34.14B apply to all business in Plenary.

31.14D Where votes are conducted in accordance with Standing Order 34.14A, Standing Order 12.44 does not apply, but before any vote is taken, the Presiding Officer must suspend proceedings for at least five minutes. If votes are to be taken immediately after one another, only one suspension of proceedings is necessary.

### Voting in Committees

34.14E Where the Chair of a committee determines that it is required for the protection of public health, arrangements may be made for voting in committee to be conducted by electronic means, and for Members to vote from any location.

34.14F Standing Order 34.14D applies to all business in a committee.